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AUTUMNAL COMPLAINTS.

BY MR. CHURCHILL, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, PRINCES-STREET, LEICESTER-SQUARE, LONDON.

At this season of the year, one of the most prevalent diseases is a relaxation of the digestive organs. It arises from various causes; such as the application of cold to the extremities, eating various fruits, &c. It comes on with pain, flatulence, sickness, with or without vomiting, followed by loss of appetite, general lassitude and weakness. If attended to at its first appearance, it may soon be relieved; for which purpose, it is necessary to assist nature in throwing off the contents of the bowels, which may be done by means of the following prescription:—

Take of calomel, three grains; rhubarb, eight grains: mix and take it in a little honey or jelly, and repeat the dose three times, at the intervals of four or five hours. The next purpose to be answered, is the defence of the lining membrane of the intestines from their acrid contents, which will be best effected by drinking copiously of linseed tea, or of a drink made by pouring boiling water on quince seeds, which are of a very mucilaginous nature. If the complaint continue after these means have been employed, some astringent or binding medicine will be required, as the subjoined:—

Take of prepared chalk, two drachms; cinnamon water, seven ounces; syrup of poppies, one ounce: mix and take three table spoonfuls every four hours. Should this fail to complete the cure, half an ounce of tincture of catechu, or of kino, may be added to it, and then it will seldom fail. While any symptoms of derangement are present, particular attention must be paid to the diet, which should be of a soothing, lubricating, and light nature, as instanced in veal or chicken broth, which should contain but little salt. Rice, batter, and bread puddings will be generally relished, and be eaten with advantage; but the stomach is too much impaired to digest food of a more solid nature. Indeed, we should give that organ, together with the bowels, as little trouble as possible, while they are so incapable of acting in their accustomed manner.

Much mischief is frequently produced by the absurd practice of taking tincture of rhubarb, which is almost certain of aggravating that species of disorder, of which we have now treated; for it is a spirit as strong as brandy, and cannot fail of producing harm upon a surface which is rendered tender by the formation and contact of vitiated bile.

SNUFF-TAKING

AND ITS PERNICIOUS EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN FRAME.

As the nerves of the nostrils are more naked or thinly covered than any other part of the body, they are extremely sensitive; and when snuff is applied to them, all the nerves of the system become affected by sympathy; hence the taking of snuff has, like smoking, a narcotic effect on the brain, and through it, on the mind itself, and particularly tends to weaken the memory.

If used as a medicine only, and on occasions that require such a stimulus, the taking of snuff may be of some advantage; though, in such cases, some physicians prefer a liquid snuff. If the stimulus, however, of the snuff be too violent, it may bring on so profuse a discharge from the nostrils as may relax and corrode them, and produce an incurable *polypus*, as a concretion of clotted blood, so as to block up the nostrils altogether. In several diseases of the head, eyes, and ears, the taking of snuff may occasionally supply the place of an artificial issue; though an extravagant use of it will most certainly produce a contrary effect; such as collections of matter in the head, bleeding of the nose, deafness, and other complaints. To those who are consumptive, who are subject to spitting of blood, or have symptoms of internal ulcers, nothing can be more prejudicial than snuff-taking.

The practice infallibly vitiates the smell; of course it impairs the taste, and it also dulls the hearing; for as the internal tube of the ear opens directly behind the back part of the nostril, the particles of the snuff often lodge and accumulate there to a very injurious degree. By stimulating the nerves of the eyes also, it often brings on

serious diseases of sight; so that it appears it is hurtful to all the senses except the sense of touch.

Snuff, if taken too freely, may fall into the stomach, and produce serious disorders of digestion and of the liver.

Besides, it may also occasion continual and troublesome flatulence; for when the nose is obstructed, the person must breathe chiefly by the mouth, and must in this way swallow great quantities of air, which will bulge out the stomach, and do much injury to the health, and may end in confirmed hypochondria.

No public speaker, teacher of languages, or professional singer, ought to indulge in the practice, as it infallibly injures articulation, and weakens the force of the voice by not permitting a free exit for the air from the lungs; which, of course, it must cramp and confine in the action of breathing.

IRELAND—THE IRISH CHARACTER.

The description given of our island by almost every writer who has ever mentioned it, does not argue much in favour of the taste displayed by our absentees. Spencer, who cannot be accused of much partiality, describes it thus:—"And sure it is yet a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish abundantly, sprinkled with many sweet islands and goodly lakes, like little inland seas, that will carry even ships upon their waters; adorned with goodly woods even fit for building houses and ships, so commodiously, as that if some princes in the world had them, they would soon hope to be lord of all the seas, and ere long of all the world; also full of very good ports and havens opening upon England, inviting us to come unto them to see what excellent commodities that country can afford; besides the soyle it selfe most fertile, fit to yield all kind of fruit that shall be committed thereunto. And lastly, the heavens most milde and temperate, though somewhat more moist than the parts towards the east."—*Spencer's View of Ireland*, p. 30.

This description seems to warrant that highly coloured one given by the Poet:—

"Far westward lies an isle of ancient fame
By nature blessed, and Scotia* is her name;
Enrolled in books—exhaustless in her store
Of veiny silver, and of golden ore;
Her fruitful soil for ever teems with wealth,
With gems her waters—and her air with health—
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow;
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow;
Her waving furrows float with yellow corn;
And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.
No savage bear with lawless fury roves;
No fiercer lions thro' her peaceful groves:
No poison there infects, no scaly snake
Creeps thro' the grass, nor frogs annoy the lake;
An island worthy of its pious race,
In war triumphant—and unmatched in peace."

The following portrait of the Irish character is deserving of notice, as it is drawn by the celebrated Camden; and as in this scale their virtues will be found considerably to preponderate their vices.

"They are," says he, "of a middle stature—strong of body—of an hotter and moister nature than many other nations—of wonderful soft skins—and by reason of the tenderness of their muscles, they excel in nimbleness, and the flexibility of all parts of their body. They are reckoned of a quick wit—prodigal of their lives—enduring travail, cold, and hunger—given to fleshly lusts—light of belief—kind and courteous to strangers—constant in love—impatient of abuse and injury, in enmity implacable—and in all affections most vehement and passionate."

Spencer says, "I have heard some great warriors say, that in all their services, which they had seen abroad in foreign countries, they never saw a more comely man than the Irishman, or that cometh more bravely in his charge."

* Ireland was originally called Scotia, it is supposed from the Scythians, who first inhabited the island—that people being also called Scotos or Scottos.